



Dear Community Friends,

### **Resolve for your neighborhood to be a burglary free zone in 2009!**

With the holidays now over, chances are you have new possessions at your home and/or business.

Now is a good time to take precautions to reduce your risk of losing those possessions to burglary or theft.



In a recent newsletter, we talked about the Problem Oriented Policing concept of the Crime Triangle. This concept basically says for criminal activity to occur, three elements need to be present: an offender, a target or victim and a place. If any one of these elements is altered or impacted, the criminal activity is impacted or even eliminated. Let's use this concept to address the "problem" of burglary and/or theft.

#### **Can you impact the Offender?**

Yes. Dissuade the offender from choosing your *place* as the target. You do this by being alert and paying attention to suspicious people in your neighborhood (or your workplace for that matter). Being conspicuously alert makes potential offenders nervous and will tend to make them seek a target or place that doesn't have as many eyes, or where they have less risk of being seen, identified or caught.

#### **Can you impact the Place?**

Yes. You impact the place by improving security and making it less attractive to the burglar. One thing that makes a place attractive to burglars is having cover and concealment to work on a door or window without being seen by neighbors or the occupants. Therefore, trimming shrubbery around the exterior of your home or business to improve lines of sight (to make it easier for your neighbors to see activity at your place), improving lighting and having lights that are motion activated make the place *less* attractive to burglars. The next step is to "harden the target" – make it more difficult for someone to gain illegal entry. Start by locking doors and windows. Then upgrade your door locking hardware, your windows and window latches. The crime prevention coordinators for your area can assist you with a free security evaluation of your environment and make recommendations for security improvements. You could *move* the place. I've spoken with many people who have discussed relocating a business or moving out of a neighborhood. However, regardless of where you moved, you'd have the same concerns about impacting a potential offender and reducing your risk as a target/victim. As the saying goes, "No matter where you go, there you are."

#### **Can you impact the Target/Victim?**

Yes. In this regard, I'm using "target" to refer to property at risk of being stolen. You can make the property less attractive to the thief by impacting the thief's ability to pawn or sell the property. Ensure personal property is engraved with your Driver's License or State ID number, and that your business' property is engraved with the business name and the business ID number. An electronic engraver can be purchased at most hardware or home improvement stores for under \$25. As many of us have new items we received over the holidays (new flat-panel TVs, laptop & desktop computers, gaming systems, etc.) now would be the time to engrave the items and make an inventory list of them (make, model #, serial #, location and approximate value). An additional benefit is that if marked property has been reported as stolen, and someone other than the owner is found with that property, the person with the item can be detained and investigated for possession of stolen property.

These are not the only solutions, just one example of how to use the Crime Triangle to address a specific crime concern. The same problem solving principles can be used to tackle any neighborhood quality of life or public safety issue. We'll explore some of those examples in future Newsletters.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator